

Faughan RP Church Session Report 2020

We give thanks to God for another year in the life of the Faughan Congregation. Even though due to the Covid pandemic, it has been a year like no other, we can be strengthened by the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 90:1 *'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.'*

We appreciate God's word being faithfully preached by our minister, Rev Steven Robinson, both in person and online when the pandemic restrictions prevented us from meeting. During the year, the minister concluded his series from Romans; preached a number of sermons from John 17 on 'The High Priestly Prayer'; commenced a series on Nehemiah and preached from the Gospel of John on 'The Seven Signs and The Seven Discourses'. We thank him for his diligence in preparing sermons that are Christ-centred, gospel focused, practical, relevant for today and suitable for the range of listeners in the congregation and online. We continue to pray and thank God for Steven, his wife Zita and their boys Daniel, Adam and Mark.

The Worship of God

The congregation met for worship each Lord's Day either in person or online. The Covid lockdown meant that services went online between March and June with a morning service each week being streamed live and uploaded on to the church website. There was another shorter period of lockdown in the autumn when the services were also online. The number attending services in church was reduced as several people were shielding and others felt unable to attend due to the pandemic. The average attendance at the morning service in the church meeting house was 33. We averaged 23 at the evening service in the church hall. It was difficult to ascertain the exact numbers listening online although there were some indications that a good number were watching the live stream or listening via the website.

When 'normality' resumes, we encourage our members who profess faith in Christ, to be present in Church to worship God morning and evening, each week, unless there is a legitimate reason for not being there. Regular attendance is honouring to God and gives believers an opportunity to hear what God has to say to them through his word and have fellowship with one-another. Faithful attendance is a display of our love for our Saviour and an encouragement to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We encourage more members to attend the prayer meetings preceding the morning and evening services.

Session thank those who provided pulpit supply during the minister's holidays and other times when he was away preaching in other congregations. These were Rev Blair McFarland; Mr Matthew Magee; Mr Peter Neilly; Mr Derek Lynch; Mr David McConachie and Mr Graham Fallows.

Work of Session

Session met regularly during the year and the elders attended the various meetings of Presbytery and Synod. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to carry out pastoral visitation as planned. However, the minister was in regular contact by telephone with those of the congregation who were shielding or unable to attend church. He also delivered CDs of worship services each week.

Following the election of elders in October 2019, Dr James Steele was ordained and installed, and Calum Morrison was installed on the 26th of January 2020 to the office of Ruling Elder in the congregation.

In November 2020 Robert Steele resigned as Session Clerk. We thank Robert for his diligent work over the last three years as Clerk and for all the other duties he faithfully carries out in the congregation. At the session meeting on 24th November 2020 Calum Morrison was unanimously appointed as Session Clerk.

Session continues to value the prayers of members for every aspect of congregational life, especially for those who through old age or ill health are not able to meet with us as they once did.

Congregational Youth

The Covid pandemic severely restricted the normal work amongst our young people. The Sabbath School met for a few weeks at the start of the year and we give thanks for the superintendent, Paul, and teachers Liz and Robert, and others who helped from time to time. This responsibility had then to be carried by parents due to it not being possible for classes to meet. We encourage parents in their duty to train up their children. We believe the instruction of our covenant youth is a very important part of our church's work and trust and pray that the diligence of those involved will bear fruit.

Praise

We commend our main precentor, Liz for leading the praise and thank others who help from time to time. During the pandemic we have used praise recordings some of the time and we thank James Steele Jnr for his help with this.

Church Calendar

The printed Church Calendar was produced for the first three months of the year prior to the first lockdown. Since then, the church activities were significantly reduced and the calendar update for each month was uploaded to the front page of the website.

Church Website and Live Streaming

During the periods of lockdown, the Sabbath morning services were live streamed on the church Facebook page. All the services were also uploaded on to the church website www.faughanrpc.org shortly after they took place. A limited number of CDs were produced for those who were unable to access the internet. Thanks go to those who provided these means of outreach during the year namely Paul, James, Jonathan and Philip.

Changes to Congregational Roll

During the year three members of the congregation died. Miss May Mitchell passed away on 7th February; Mrs Margaret Buchanan on 9th June and the Rev Prof Robin Patterson on 6th November. The minister visited and supported these members and their families through their time of weakness and preached at their services of thanksgiving, presenting the gospel to all present. We thank God

for the lives of these dear members and for their faithful service to the congregation and wider church over many years.

'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' Psalm 116:15

Sacraments

During the year the Lord's Supper was observed in January with 31 communicants participating. Due to the pandemic it was not possible to meet around the Lord's Table in May and September.

Midweek and Home-Based Meetings

Up to the first period of lockdown, the midweek meetings on Tuesday evenings were held in the homes of several families. The topic for discussion was the Sabbath morning sermons. We thank those who opened their homes for these meetings. During the spring lockdown the meetings were changed to Wednesday and held via Zoom. The topics for discussion continued with the Sabbath morning sermons.

When the midweek meetings recommenced in the autumn, we studied the Christian Institute publication 'Living Christianity', a series of five studies about God's calling for his people in the world. The minister led a study on the relationship between church and state. The Session had agreed that there would be a monthly missionary input at the midweek and this commenced with video presentations from EMF on their work in Italy; CWI on their work in Amsterdam and Jerusalem, and Release International on their work in support of persecuted Christians.

The **Ladies' Bible Study** recommenced in March but was only able to meet once prior to lockdown.

The **Ladies' Fellowship** met in January to attend the YPC Ladies' coffee morning talk and stayed for lunch at the White Horse Hotel. No further meetings were possible, but ladies kept in touch informally.

Outreach

The Covid pandemic had a significant impact on our outreach activities. For this reason, Session decided that reports from the various outreach groups would not be included this year. However, a summary of the groups' activities is included below.

The **Friday Night Club** recommenced after the February half-term holiday but was only able to meet twice prior to lockdown. A pack, with a letter and some topical Bible teaching, related craft activities, colouring materials and a Bible story book was prepared and sent to each family who had been attending.

The **Parent and Toddler Group** continued to meet in the Hall on Tuesday mornings for a few weeks until the beginning of March.

The **Pop-Up Café** met at the beginning of February and March.

A **Church Lunch** was held in January and **Tea** was served every other week after the evening service during January and February.

The **Annual Praise Service** was held on the 5th of January with 54 in attendance.

A **Men's Breakfast, Congregational Weekend and Ladies' Coffee Morning** were all planned to take place in the spring, with speakers organised, but they all had to be cancelled.

The **Bowls Club** met on a few occasions at the beginning of the year.

The Session thanks all those involved in making these means of outreach possible and those who helped by providing and serving food.

Door-to door visitation had been planned but was unable to take place. However, a new information leaflet about the church and our services was prepared and distributed along with an evangelistic tract by Roger Carswell entitled 'Hope Beyond Coronavirus', to 2000 homes in the local area. We pray that God may still use this form of outreach to grow His Kingdom and bring new people to our services once the pandemic starts to subside.

Committee

The Committee was able to have all its scheduled meetings during the year including two via Zoom. Session is very pleased that the Committee has been able to get so much work done at the church property in such a difficult year. The improvements, especially at the entrance to the church buildings, are a great addition.

We thank the members, Paul (Chair), Matthew (Secretary), Trevor (Treasurer), Jordan, Mark, Eileen, Hazel, and James (Jnr), for their diligent work in overseeing the congregation's properties and finances. We would also like to thank Pamela for all the work she does to help with the finances of the congregation.

Conclusion

We thank God for his love and care for us over the past year.

'And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' Colossians 3:17

Respectfully Submitted,

Calum Morrison (Clerk of Session)